

تحليل اليوتوبيا والديستوبيا في رواية "١٩٨٤" لجورج أورويل و"نحن" ليفجيني زامياتين

ANALYZING UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA IN "1984" BY GEORGE ORWELL AND "WE"
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ABSTRACT

The Main topic of this study is the analysis and comparison of the depiction of utopian and dystopian principles in the novels "We" by Yevgeni Zamyatin and "1984" by George Orwell. In this research, we first look at the definition of utopia and dystopia, and at the definition, we seek the difference between dystopia and anti-utopia. Based on these definitions, we determine the genre of the two novels. Then, we look at the depiction of dystopia in the novels, the organization of society, and totalitarianism, comparing the novels "We" and "1984" to Thomas More's Utopia and Plato's Republic. This work aims to highlight the similarities and differences between two very important novels that deal with the problem of utopia and dystopia.

Keywords: Utopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, Yevgeny Zamyatin, George Orwell

المستخلص

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل ومقارنة تصوير مبدأ اليوتوبيا (ادب المدينة الفاضلة او الطوباوية او المثالية) وضد اليوتوبيا (الدستوبيا او ادب المدينة الفاسدة او عالم الواقع المرير). في روايات "نحن" ليفجيني زامياتين و"١٩٨٤" لجورج أورويل. في هذا البحث، ننظر أولاً إلى تعريف مصطلحات اليوتوبيا والدستوبيا او ضد اليوتوبيا وتعريف الفرق بين الديستوبيا وضد او اليوتوبيا. بناءً على هذه التعريفات، نحدد نوع الروايتين، ثم ننظر إلى تصوير الدستوبيا في الروايات، وتنظيم المجتمع وتصوير الاستبداد، ومقارنة روايات "نحن" و"١٩٨٤" برواية "يوتوبيا" لتوماس مور و"جمهورية أفلاطون". يهدف هذا العمل إلى الإشارة إلى أوجه التشابه، ولكن أيضاً الاختلافات، بين روايتين مهمتين للغاية تتناولان مشكلة اليوتوبيا و الديستوبيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اليوتوبيا، الديستوبيا، ضد اليوتوبيا، يفجيني زامياتين، جورج أورويل.

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the dystopian genre, some of the most famous writers are the Russian writer Yevgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin (1884–1937) and the British writer George Orwell (1903–1950). In 1920, Yevgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin wrote one of the most significant dystopian novels – the dystopian novel "We," but this novel was published in the USSR in 1988. The novel's main character is number D-503, the ship "Integral" builder, who writes down his understanding of the One State society in his diary. In other words, the novel is a diary that describes a dystopian society through the eyes of D-503.

Zamyatin and his novel "We" influenced George Orwell, and therefore, in 1949, Orwell wrote and published the dystopian novel "1984". The novel 1984 describes the dystopian society and state of Oceania 1984 through the eyes of the main character, Winston Smith. The topic of this research is the analysis and comparison of the novels "We" by Zamyatin and "1984" by Orwell. We will first focus on explaining the terms utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia. Then, we will focus on describing the

dystopian world in these novels, how to characterize the main characters and the language characteristics.

WHAT IS UTOPIA?

The word utopia comes from Greek, where the prefix ou means not, and the word topos means place. Therefore, utopia can be defined as a place that does not exist. Damir Grubisha mentions another understanding of utopia in his text *How to Read Utopia*. He explains that in Greek, there is also a prefix eu, which allows you to form the word eutopia. (Grubisha, 2003) . The terms utopia and eutopia in English are homophones. The word eutopia means a beautiful and cheerful place, a society that has achieved a perfect power system. In the dictionary, you can find three interpretations of the word utopia. The first interpretation describes utopia as "an image of an ideal social system, devoid of scientific justification" (Dal, 1998, p. 971) . The second interpretation defines utopia as "a work that paints pictures of an ideal social order in complete isolation from reality, from the laws of social development" (Dal, 1998, p. 971) . The third interpretation defines utopia as "an unrealizable dream; fiction, fantasy" (Dal, 1998, p. 971) . One can see the connection between these interpretations and the words utopia and eutopia. But, if one needs to explain the understanding of utopia, one can say that we are talking about a perfect place, an ideal society.

The understanding of utopia known worldwide came about thanks to Thomas More, an English philosopher and the author of one of the most significant philosophical works called "Utopia". This work was first published in 1516, when, in the words of Damir Grubisha, "the European Renaissance reached its zenith" (Grubisha, 2003, p. 11) , and the ideas of humanism began to spread across Europe. Thomas More used the word utopia in his work for the first time to describe his imaginary island. Therefore, Fatima Vieira writes, "It must be remembered that in 1516, the word utopia

was a neologism" (Vieira, 2010, p. 3) . She explains that in his work, More used the terms utopia and eutopia, but he also used another name for his island. More called his island Nusquam. Vieira explains that Nusquam is a Latin word that means a non-existent place. Plato was one of the first utopians to present ideas of a perfect society as early as 370 BC. Lewis Mumford, an American philosopher and historian, mentions utopian tendencies already in Ancient Greece. Mumford writes that Plato's Republic describes a perfect state as a city-state. (Mumford, 2008) .

It differs from other cities and states and has a clear border, so Plato's city-state can be compared to More's island. "The population can be divided into three classes in Plato's utopia. The first class comprises the smartest people, philosophers, and the state's rulers. The second class is warriors, and they protect the state. The third class comprises farmers who grow food for the state" (Khalkhal, 2020, p. 13) . In Thomas More's Utopia, there is also a division of tasks between people, but his division is more complex. It must be explained that each class was engaged in its tasks and "More simply did not create a picture of an ideal state structure, where harmony between the highest authority and the individual is achieved, but he formed the leading ideas of utopia, which existed until the 1770s. On More's blessed island, private property is abolished, and people are equal in all respects: from politics, economics, and law to housing, clothing, and jewellery" (Kovtun, 2009, p. 17). It can be concluded that More and Plato wrote about states and societies in which everyone is equal, and there is no hierarchy between people. What else connects the utopias of More and Plato is a person's life in harmony with nature, but in this work, we will not see that in the novels of Zamyatin and Orwell. According to the principle of Plato and More and other utopians, a utopian genre and a utopian text were formed in literature, which "models a better reality despite the existing reality, acts as a kind of mirror reflecting the vices of reality" (Kovtun, 2009, p. 4) . Kovtun describes that the classical understanding of utopia connects utopia with an island, city or country

"where there is no need to work, but eternally rest and have fun" (Kovtun, 2009, p. 27) . People thought about a place where everything is at their fingertips and labor and work do not exist.

ANTI-UTOPIA OR DYSTOPIA? Utopia is an ideal place. After the formation of the term utopia, the opposite term anti-utopia /dystopia. The term dystopia first appeared in 1868 and was used by John Stuart Mill to explain his criticism of the utopian ideas of that time. The word dystopia also comes from Greek and means a bad place. Vieira writes that the term kakotopia is used in addition to dystopia. The term kakotopia was first used by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, and this term also comes from the Greek language, in which the prefix kako means something unpleasant. Dystopia and kakotopia are synonyms, but as for anti-utopia, many researchers disagree and often do not consider anti-utopia and dystopia to be true synonyms. Therefore, the question arises about the difference between dystopia and anti-utopia. In English, the terms utopia and dystopia are antonyms.

However, in Russian, the antonym of the word utopia is anti-utopia, and dystopia is a possible synonym for it. Still, it is only sometimes used in studies and books. Branko Polich, in his book *Poetics and Politics of Vladimir Mayakovsky*, interprets dystopia as the opposite of utopia and describes dystopia as a work in which one can see "anxiety about the future, the absence of hope" (Polich, 1988, p. 16) . Polich explains that anti-utopia is not a synonym for dystopia but is in a neutral position. In other words, utopia and dystopia are opposed, and anti-utopia is between these terms. Polich writes that dystopia is "a place that exists, but its qualities are not defined" (Polich, p. 19) . It is a place whose characteristics cannot be defined. Fatima Vieira, a professor at the University of Porto, has written many studies dealing with utopia, dystopia, and anti-utopia. Vieira explains that utopia and dystopia are opposites when discussing the idea of society and the construction of a state, the idea of the

future. But when it comes to genres and subgenres, Vieira divides the utopian genre into satirical and anti-utopias. She describes satirical utopia as the description of "an imaginary society that is impossible due to technological and biological impossibilities" (Vieira, 2010, p. 15). As for anti-utopia, she explains that "anti-utopia mocks utopian ideas, while satirical utopia shows doubt in utopian ideas" (Vieira, p. 16). In the end, Vieira defines dystopia as a utopia that has been poorly implemented. In other words, it is a utopian experiment that has had an undesirable result. We are talking about anti-utopias if we want to define the novels "We" and "1984" according to Vieira. These novels ironically describe utopian ideas of society.

The biggest difference between understanding the terms dystopia and anti-utopia was offered by Peter Fitting in his work "Utopia, dystopia and science fiction". He explained that dystopia describes a future worse than the present, and anti-utopia criticises the ideas of an ideal state.

The definition of the genre of the novels depends on the language of the theoretical definition. In English texts, you can find the definition of a dystopian novel. However, studies and books in Russian define these novels as anti-utopian novels. Since this research is in English, I decided to define these novels as dystopian novels. As already written, the novels "We" and "1984" mock utopian ideas; therefore, they are dystopian novels.

DYSTOPIA IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELS "WE" AND 1984"

"In the 20th century, utopias are not limited to a romantic rebellion against machines and the onset of new industrial technology. The social meaning of negative utopia is changing. Two world wars, social upheavals caused by revolutions in Europe, the threat of totalitarianism, and the danger of thermonuclear war – all these events gave

rise to anxiety about the future of humanity. They contributed to the transformation of positive utopias into negative ones." (Shestakov, 2012, p. 39, 40).

In Zamyatin's novel, events appear similar to the Russian Civil War. The novel "We" was banned in Soviet Russia and later in the USSR because the Soviet authorities were unhappy with the theme of this novel. The novels "We" and "1984" are considered critics of socialist power. It is understood that they present socialism as a type of totalitarianism. In the novel "1984", Orwell formed Ingsoc or English socialism. This is an English socialist party that, after the revolution and victory in Oceania, became a totalitarian party. It is worth mentioning that the opposite of Socialism as a political system is Capitalism, which is "fundamentally different from any other system because it is an "unhuman" and subversive mode of production that transforms everything, including human beings, into commodities. Capitalism is introduced as a tyrannous system that uses everything in the characters' everyday lives as suppressive tools to enforce its values and maintain its continuity. "(Hussein, 2021, p.2).

The novels describe the impact of technological development and how this development can become an enemy of society. Vieira writes, "Zamyatin and Orwell inspired generations of writers with their novels, which describe not only a totalitarian system but also a bad future as a result of evolution" (Vieira, 2010, p. 18). In Orwell's novel, Big Brother's strict control reigns with the help of televisions in every room. The televisions are equipped with cameras to control the inhabitants completely, so it is impossible to escape the gaze of Big Brother. Plato and More, in their utopias, described the importance of harmony between man and nature. Zamyatin and Orwell, in their novels, showed humanity's negative reaction to technological and intellectual evolution.

"In the classical dystopia, the image of the future way of life was reduced to a three-member model "state – society – man" with a clear distribution of functions: the state, in the person of the main manager (Benefactor, Big Brother, etc.), appropriated the right to dispose of all the matter of life, all human resources and built a system of ideological simulacra, with the help of which it was possible to manipulate the consciousness of society and the individual purposefully." (Vorobyeva, 2011, p. 229).

Nevertheless, Plato and More wrote about a state where everyone was equal. Zamyatin and Orwell wrote about totalitarian states. The action of the novel "We" takes place in the One State. The all-powerful ruler of the state is the Benefactor, a totalitarian person who has complete control over the numbers of the state. Each person in the state has a task. The main protagonist of the novel "We", number D-503, performs the function of the builder of the spaceship Integral. In her book *Dystopia and Language*, Rafaela Bozich describes the connection between the characters' names in the novel and their functions in the state. Firstly, people in the novel are called numbers. Numbers do not have a first name, patronymic or last name; thus, numbers have lost an important part of their individuality and personality. This name shows that the numbers are unimportant for the state and society because, at any moment, another number can be assigned to a certain function. Bozich writes that "the names of the numbers consist of one phoneme, either a consonant (if we are talking about a masculine character) or a vowel (if we are talking about a feminine character) and a numeral. Bozich explains that numerals show their position and importance in society. The number S-4711 fulfils an important function in society, and the number R-13, a poet, is unnecessary for the state." (Bozich 2013, p. 37, 38). Then, Bozich also describes the role of the word, the phoneme, in the name. She explains that the phoneme characterizes the numbers, which can be seen in the example of the number O-90:

"Dear O! — it always seemed to me — that she resembled her name: about 10 centimetres shorter than the Maternal Norm — and therefore all rounded, and a pink O — mouth — open to meet my every word. And also: a round, plump little fold on the wrist — children have those." (Zamyatin, 1988, p. 2). Bozich mentions in her book that the One State resembles a prison. She compared the names of the numbers with the number of prisoners in the prison (Bozich, 2013, p. 38). One can conclude that she was not far from the truth. The numbers were prisoners of the One State.

Looking at the state of the novel "1984", we can see similarities with the novel "We". In Oceania, the all-powerful ruler is Big Brother. The government of Oceania consists of four ministries: the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Abundance, and the Ministry of Love. The Ministry of Peace regulates the military actions of the state. The Ministry of Truth deals with the history of the state and the change of information. The Ministry of Love deals with thought criminals and enemies of the state, and the Ministry of Abundance regulates the amount of food, products, and personal belongings. In Oceania, a hierarchy of society reigns. At the top of the hierarchy are Big Brother and the rest of the guardians of the state, and at the bottom of the hierarchy are illiterate people who can be easily controlled.

Complete control over society also means the absence of freedom. In the novels "We" and "1984", freedom does not exist; freedom is the enemy of society:

"Liberation"? Amazing: how tenacious criminal instincts are in the human race. I deliberately say: "criminal". Freedom and crime are as inextricably linked as... well, as the movement of an Airplane and its speed: the speed of an Airplane = 0, and it does not move; a person's freedom = 0, and he does not commit crimes. This is clear. The only way to rid a person of crime is to rid him of freedom. And we have

barely gotten rid of this (on the cosmic scale of a century, this is, of course, "barely") when suddenly some pathetic morons..." (Zamyatin, 1988, p. 7).

The inhabitants of Oceania and the Numbers of the One State constantly feel anxious. One bad thought or one mistake separates them from death. The state regulates everything: what they eat, what they can use, and who they can communicate with. The state also controls information, what is true and what is a lie. Winston Smith works in the Ministry of Truth, correcting old newspapers. It is difficult for Smith to remember life before Oceania because Big Brother has completely changed history. The inhabitants of Oceania unthinkingly follow Big Brother:

"It will come to the point where the Party will say: two plus two make five, and you must believe it. Sooner or later, they will come to that; it follows logically from their policy. For the Party, philosophy denies experience and the reality of the external world. Common sense is the most terrible heresy." (Orwell, 2024, p. 30).

People were forbidden to think; they were only supposed to listen and repeat everything that Big Brother said, but if they decided to think about something, they were threatened with punishment because, in Oceania, there is thoughtcrime. "Crime does not entail death: thoughtcrime I.S. death." (Orwell, p. 32). Thoughtcrime is a crime when a person thinks negatively about the state or forbidden things when he thinks about the time before the all-powerful state and doubts the all-powerful ruler.

The best example of totalitarian power can be found in the language of Oceania in the novel "1984". The Oceanian Authority decided to introduce a new language, Newspeak, to destroy the old English language. This new language represents a reduced vocabulary and the destruction of words that Big Brother could be happier with. "Orwell wants to be a political reformer; he tries to change the world through his writing. In "Why I Write", he states: "Every line of serious work that I have written

since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand" (Ali, 2021, p. 8).

Newspeak aims to limit the amount of thought crime and, in the end, to make this type of crime impossible: "The object of Newspeak is not only to provide the followers of Ingsoc with the necessary means of expressing their own ideological and spiritual passions but to make all other modes of thought impossible." (Orwell, p. 41).

"War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength." (Orwell, p. 44). Thomas More wrote in his novel "Utopia" that there can be no war in a utopian society. In Oceania, war is a necessity. Oceania is constantly at war, at one point against Eurasia and another against Eastasia.

At the novel's beginning, it is obvious that love does not exist in One State and Oceania. People do not fall in love; they only perform a sexual function to conceive a child and a new member of society:

"And isn't it absurd that the state (it boldly calls itself a state!) could leave sexual life without any control? Who, when and how much they wanted... Completely unscientific, like animals. And like animals, unquestioningly, they gave birth to children. Isn't it funny to know gardening, chicken farming, fish farming (we have precise data that they knew all this) and not be able to reach the last step of this logical ladder: child-rearing." (Zamyatin, 1988, p. 3)

The state controls all aspects of life in numbers, and it regulates who has sexual relations with whom:

"Well, then — there is technology. You are carefully examined in the laboratories of the Sexual Bureau, the content of sex hormones in the blood is precisely determined — and a corresponding Table of Sexual Days is developed for you. Then, you make

a statement that on your days, you wish to use the number such-and-such (or ten such-and-such), and you receive the appropriate coupon book (pink). That's all." (Orwell, p. 52).

In the novel "We", O-90, I-330 and Yu all fell in love with D-503. Number O-90 is a certain sexual partner of D-503, and both were allowed to use the other. But people need love; a person falls in love with another person, which happens in the novel. In this way, Zamyatin described the possible destruction of the dystopia and the rebellion against totalitarian rules. In the novel "1984", Julia falls in love with the main character, Winston Smith. While reading this novel, I realized that Winston Smith is sometimes a sexual person. For example, no one is attractive to him; he hates to think about his ex-wife, but Julia awakens a completely different Winston Smith.

What connects the novels "We" and "1984" is the idea of revolution and rebellion, which is unsuccessful at the end of the novels. The heroes of D-503 and Winston Smith felt love; they felt like free people for a short time, but ultimately, the enemy won "Man as the victim of false understanding in a changing society". (Sharif, 2020, p.7).

The totalitarian state destroyed the idea of revolution and reason in people:

"I smile – I can't help but smile: some splinter was pulled out of my head, my head is light, empty. More precisely, it is not empty, but nothing extraneous prevents me from smiling (a smile is the normal state of a normal person). The facts are as follows. That evening, my neighbor, who had discovered the finiteness of the universe, and I, and everyone with us, were taken as not having a certificate of the operation and taken to the nearest auditorium (the auditorium number is somehow familiar: 112). Here, we were tied to tables and subjected to the Great Operation." (Orwell, p. 75).

The novels "We" and "1984" are the best examples of dystopia because the idea of revolution was not fulfilled. The omnipotent rulers showed that they cannot be defeated and that the enemy will always be at the top of the hierarchy of society.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we explained the difference between utopia, dystopia and anti-utopia. Reading the studies of More, Vieira, and Kovtun, who dealt with the problems of utopia, I concluded that "We" by Yevgeny Zamyatin and "1984" by George Orwell are dystopian or anti-utopian novels. In their novels, both writers ironically described the events of the twentieth century and the utopian ideas of socialism. In their novels, we got acquainted with societies in which the complete control of all-powerful rulers and constant fear of the inhabitant's reign. Freedom and individuality do not exist in these societies, and the inhabitants can be compared to prisoners. Zamyatin and Orwell perfectly described anti-utopias in which there is no possibility of improving the state of society, and each attempt at revolution in the end fails.

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